

Message Text

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AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T

XCINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS/ PINT, IN
SUBJ: OFF-YEAR STATE ELECTIONS: CONGRESS BY A HAIR

SUMMARY: WITH ITS PRO-MOSCOW COMMUNIST (CPI) ALLIES, THE
RULING CONGRESS HAS ACHIEVED THE NARROWEST OF STATE ELECTION
VICTORIES IN POPULOUS UTTAR PRADESH AND BACKWARD ORISSA.
DESPITE INFLATION, SCARCITIES, AND URBAN DISCONTENT (BUT
AIDED BY MASSIVE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT RESOURCES, GOOD VOTER TURN-
OUT, AND OPPOSITION DISUNITY), MRS. GANDHI'S PARTY HAS MANAGED
TO WIN STATE ASSEMBLY MAJORITIES WITH POPULAR PLURALITIES.
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IN TINY PONDICHERRY, THE ANNA DMK-CPI COMBINED EDGED OUT THE

RULING CONGRESS-OLD CONGRESS ALLIANCE AND HUMBLED TAMIL NADU'S GOVERNING DMK PARTY. NAGALAND AND MANIPUR RETURNED NON-CONGRESS MAJORITIES. RELYING MORE ON OLD-STYLE TACTICS THAN ON THE CHARISMA OF 1971-72, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS SURVIVED THE IMMEDIATE TEST. STATE GOVERNMENT STABILITY MAY STILL ELUDE HER. THESE ELECTIONS SHOULD HAVE NO APPRECIABLE INFLUENCE ON INDO-US RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. IF "VICTORY" CAN BE DEFINED AS OBTAINING ENOUGH SEATS TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, THE RULING CONGRESS HAS WON A NARROW ONE IN MRS. GANDHI'S HOME STATE, UTTAR PRADESH. ON THE BASIS OF NEARLY COMPLETE RETURNS, THE CONGRESS HAS A MAJORITY OF ONE VOTE OVER ALL OTHER PARTIES. HIGH VOTER TURNOUT (PERHAPS 60 PERCENT) INDICATES THAT THE RURAL MASSES HAVE NOT YET ABANDONED THEIR FAITH IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS NOR IN MRS. GANDHI. THE CONGRESS ALLIANCE WITH THE CPI (22 SEATS WERE LEFT UNCONTESTED FOR IT) MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE HELPED THE RULING PARTY, BUT IT PERMITTED THE CIP TO QUADRUPLE ITS ASSEMBLY STRENGTH. MOST OBSERVERS FEEL THAT DESPITE THE ALLIANCE AND THE NARROW MARGIN OF VICTORY, DEFECTORS FROM THE OLD CONGRESS, FROM AMONG THE INDEPENDENTS, OR FROM THE CONSERVATIVE, SMALL-HOLDER BASED BHRAATIYA KRANTI DAL (BKD) WILL SOON SWELL THE RULING CONGRESS RANKS. CHIEF MINISTER BAHAGUNA SHOULD NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE COMMUNISTS IN THE MINISTRY NOR NEED THEIR SUPPORT IN THE LEGISLATURE. WITH RESULTS FOR 421 OF THE 425 SEATS DECLARED, THE PARTY POSITION IS AS FOLLOWS:
(FIGURE IN PARENTHESIS INDICATES THE NUMBER OF SEATS PREVIOUSLY HELD)

RULING CONGRESS 213 (272) OLD CONGRESS 10 (37)

BKD 105 (42) MARXIST COMMUNISTS 2 (1)

JANA SANGH 61 (39) OTHERS 16 (31)

CPI 16 (4)

IF ONE GOES BACK TO 1969 AND THE LAST LEGISLATURE ELECTION IN UP, THE RESULTS IN 1974 PARALLEL VERY CLOSELY THOSE FIVE YEARS EARLIER. IN THE INTERIM, HOWEVER, LARGE NUMBERS OF DEFECTORS SWELLED THE CONGRESS(R) RANKS IN THE LEGISLATURE. BASIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE STATE HAVE NOT REALLY ALTERED MUCH IN FIVE YEARS.

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2. IN ORISSA, WHERE THE PERCENTAGE OF TRIBALS IS HIGH AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE ERSTWHILE RAJAS STILL STRONG, FACTION AND DEFLECTION HAVE BEEN THE TWO CONSTANTS OF POLITICAL LIFE. IN THE CURRENT STATE ELECTIONS THE CONGRESS WAS LED BY FORMER CHIEF MINISTER NANDINI SATPATHY, AN EX-COMMUNIST. THE STATE CONGRESS AND CPI WERE CLOSE ALLIES AGAINST THE CONSERVATIVE PRAGATI PARTY COMPOSED OF BIJU PATNAIK'S UTKAL CONGRESS AND R N SINGH DEO'S

SWATANTRA. THOUGH VOTER TURNOUT WAS LOW (NO EXACT FIGURES AVAILABLE), THE CONGRESS-CPI COMBINE OBTAINED A MAJORITY OF THE 147 SEATS, MOSTLY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE RAJA-BACKED SWATANTRA. THE CPI MAY WELL ENTER A CONGRESS-LED MINISTRY IN THIS STATE. LACKING RETURNS FROM ONLY TWO CONSTITUENCIES, THE RESULTS ARE AS FOLLOWS (FIGURE IN PARENTHESIS INDICATES THE NUMBER OF SEATS HELD JUST BEFORE MRS. SATPATHY LOST HER MAJORITY LAST MARCH):

CONGRESS 79 (80) OTHER AND INDEPENDENTS 14 (13)

CPI 7 (4) UTKAL CONGRESS 33 (14)

SWATANTRA 21 (26)

3. THE STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN REMOTE NAGALAND AND MANIPUR WERE DECIDED LARGEMLY ALONG TRIBAL LINES. IN NAGALAND, THE RULING NAGALAND NATIONALIST ORGANIZATION (NNO), DOMINATED BY THE SEMA TRIBE AND FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE CENTER AND THE CONGRESS, HELD 31 OF THE 60 SEATS IN THE DISSOLVED ASSEMBLY. IT WAS OPPOSED BY THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF) IN WHICH ANGAMI AND AO TRIBALS, SOME WITH TIES TO MORE EXTREMIST GROUPS, PREDOMINATE. THE VOTERS ELECTED 23 NNO CANDIDATES, 25 UDF CANDIDATES AND 12 INDEPENDENTS; SEVEN INDEPENDENTS THEN JOINED THE UDF AND FIVE THE NNO. THE UDF LEADER HAS BEEN INVITED TO FORM A GOVERNMENT WHICH, ACCORDING TO CONGEN CALCUTTA, HOLDS OUT HOPE OF FURTHER RECONCILIATION WITH THE "UNDERGROUND" NAGA REBELS. IN MANIPUR A COALITION MINISTRY LED BY MOHAMMED ALIMUDDIN OF THE MANIPUR PEOPLE'S PARTY (MPP) HAS RESIGNED LAST MARCH, FOLLOWING WHICH PRESIDENT'S RULE WAS PROCLAIMED. IN THE CURRENT ELECTIONS FOR THE 60-MEMBER ASSEMBLY, THE MPP WON 20 SEATS AND ITS ALLIES, THE MANIPUR HILL UNION AND THE KUKI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 12 AND 2, RESPECTIVELY. HAVING BESTED THE CONGRESS-CPI ALLIANCE, WHICH OBTAINED ONLY 18 SEATS (22 IN THE LAST ASSEMBLY), THE MPP-LED COALITION WILL AGAIN FORM THE GOVERNMENT.

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4. IN TINY PONICHERY A NEW 30 MAN ASSEMBLY WAS ELECTED. THE MAIN CONTESTANTS WERE THE DRAVIDA MUNNETRA KAZHAGAM (DMK), IN POWER IN TAMIL NADU, ALONG WITH SEVERAL MINOR PARTNERS; THE BREAKAWAY ANNA-DMK, ALLIED WITH THE CPI; AND THE "NEW" CONGRESS-OLD CONGRESS COMBINE PUT TOGETHER BY MRS. GANDHI AND K KAMARAJ. THE DMK LOST ALL BUT TWO SEATS BUT DID WELL IN THE POPULAR VOTE. THE ANNA-DMK EMERGED WITH 12 SEATS, AND THE CPI WITH TWO; THEY WILL PROBABLY FORM A GOVERNMENT WITH THE SUPPORT OF A DMK DEFECTOR AND THE LONE MARXIST COMMUNIST VICTOR. THE TWO CONGRESS PARTIES, HAVING WON ONLY 12 SEATS BETWEEN THEM, MAY MERGE. THE RESULTS IN UTTAR PRADESH AND PONDICHERRY SEE STO HAVE FINISHED THE OLD CONGRESS AS A POLITICAL FORCE, EXCEPT PERHAPS IN GUJARAT.

5. IN SCATTERED BY-ELECT

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